

AMERICA'S BIBLICAL ILLITERACY

January 22, 2000 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org) - A report ("Hey, Read the Good Book Lately") in the Bergen County (New Jersey) Record for January 9 describes the biblical ignorance that is rampant in America. Note the following examples:

** A whopping 80% of those polled by George Barna in 1996 wrongly said the Bible contains the saying "God helps those who help themselves." Nearly 65 percent did not know the message of John 3:16 ("For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...").

** Of the 50 new students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1997, only one could list the Ten Commandments.

** At Wheaton College, only one-third of new students could identify Matthew as an apostle. Half did not know that the Christmas story is in the book of Matthew, or that the Passover is in Exodus.

** Wheaton College professor Gary Burge polled "some evangelical youth groups" and discovered that only one-third could even find the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament.

** Last year, Lexington Theological Seminary started requiring that master's of divinity students to take "Introduction to the Bible," in which they are required to read the entire Bible.

In light of this gross biblical ignorance, it is no wonder that America has the foolish leaders it has and the crime that it has and the juvenile delinquency that it has. America is descending into deep apostasy, which is willful rejection of the Word of God. A nation cannot be apostate until it first has the Word of God, and then turns or falls away from it. Some 90% of those polled in 1996 by Barna said they owned a Bible, yet it is obvious that most care nothing about the Holy Scriptures in their everyday lives. The chief fault lies with the church leaders, most of whom do not honor the Word of God in their study, living, and preaching. These "clergy" fear man more than God, but one day they will regret that choice, when they answer to God for leading a generation of Americans away from the truth of God's Word and for failing to call people to repentance and the fear of God.

I praise the Lord, on the other hand, for those Bible-believing churches that are scattered across the land which do continue to exalt the Bible as the infallible Word of God and which diligently strive to train the people in it. I have had the privilege of preaching in hundreds of these churches, and if Mr. Barna would take a poll of the members of these churches he would find some Americans who know the message of John 3:16. And if Professor Burge would poll their youth groups, he would find a majority of young people who can find the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament.